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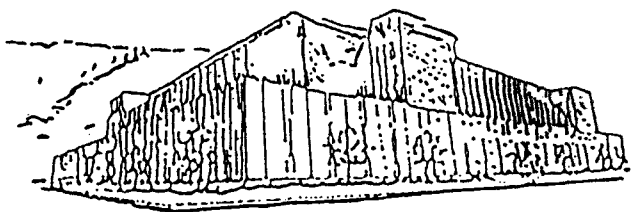
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Breaking Open the Monologic:
Re-Reading the Haitian Revolution
in
Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno*
and
Madison Smartt Bell's *All Souls' Rising*

by

Beth Marie Moynihan

M.A. The University of Montana, 1997

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements


for the degree of

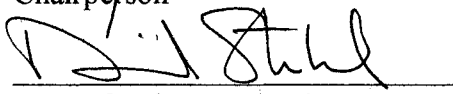
Master of Literature

The University of Montana

1997

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Breaking Open the Monologic: Re-Reading the Haitian Revolution in Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno* and Madison Smartt Bell's *All Souls' Rising* (36 pp.)

Director: Virginia Carmichael ✓

The Haitian Revolution of 1791 remains the only successful slave revolt in modern history. The thirteen-year war waged over human rights ended in 1803 with the establishment of the first black republic. This singular event has never been granted its rightful place in the history texts of Western culture. Instead of standing as an example of the true potential and capabilities of underestimated African and Creole slaves and mulattoes, it has been misinterpreted, discounted, and forgotten. In the effort to maintain a position of superiority, imperialists fit the event into their colonial world view, rationalizing its successes.

My project examines Herman Melville's novella *Benito Cereno* and Madison Smartt Bell's historical fiction *All Souls' Rising*, two texts which deal with the Haitian Revolution. Both Melville and Bell employ literary techniques to call into question the ideologies that supported this particular history of oppression. The suppression of the importance of this event rose directly out of the same ideological stance demonstrated throughout the course of it, specifically the imperialistic ideology of the Enlightenment which insisted on the superiority of white Europeans over people of all other races.

In *Benito Cereno*, Herman Melville foregrounds the cultural mechanisms of colonial oppression by presenting them in the actions and perceptions of Captain Amasa Delano. Melville's omniscient narrator subtly ironizes Delano's Enlightenment ideology, challenging the reader to complete the work of recognizing its inherent faults.

In contrast, Madison Smartt Bell employs heteroglossia in *All Souls' Rising*, including the voice of the previously silenced Other, to call culturally oppressive mechanisms into question. Bell's characters represent a full range of experiences of and reactions to colonial oppression. Through this dialogic structure, the reader is exposed to the constructed, discursive nature of these mechanisms and their effects.

Melville and Bell employ different literary techniques to question eighteenth-century rational thought. They each effectively deconstruct the monologic interpretation of the Haitian Revolution that has been created and preserved by colonial rhetoric. Melville's subversive irony and Bell's overt heteroglossia delineate the oppressive mechanics of this monologic perspective and cause the reader to be critical of them. My purpose is to demonstrate how these writers use language to undo ideological rhetoric in the service of cultural and political work.

"The sky seemed a gray surtout. Flights of troubled gray fowl, kith and kin with flights of troubled gray vapors among which they were mixed, skimmed low and fitfully over the waters, as swallows over meadows before storms. Shadows present, foreshadowing deeper shadows to come." (Melville 55)

The legacy of colonialism was predicated on a complex system of oppression ingrained into the minds and attitudes of those on both sides: the colonizer learned to be superior and domineering; the colonized were conditioned to inferiority and subservience. The conquest of far-off lands, rich in natural resources and human labor, necessitated a way of thinking which positioned indigenous people as needy and dependent upon the development that colonialism proposed. Colonialism was successful because of this mindset; it would have been impossible without it.

Post-colonial theorists, during the latter half of the twentieth century, have been examining the dynamics of colonial oppression in order to understand better what historical, cultural, social and economic factors contributed to the growth of this systematized way of thinking and what in the nature of these perceptions has served to perpetuate them through centuries. This way of viewing the colonized is the result of a consistent rhetoric developed and utilized to perceive and refer to colonized people and cultures. In his pioneering study on colonial discourse entitled *Orientalism*, post-colonial theorist Edward Said labels this stereotyping as *othering* and claims that the domination attained through it is fueled by self-interest. As such, this labeling is often contradictory and hypocritical.

The most powerful effect of this oppressive rhetoric is its naturalizing tendency. It claims to describe reality, reflecting things as they really are rather than how the colonizing power wants them to be. The colonized seem naturally inferior then, and it appears only logical for the colonizer to extract the wealth of these people in order that it may benefit the needs of *civilization*. To the colonizer, this seems to be a consequence of an innate difference between people.

Post-colonial theory seeks to re-examine the literature of or about colonized countries and their struggle for independence in order to deconstruct the role and function of imperial rhetoric. As David Spurr explains, "literary works once studied primarily as expressions of traditionally Western ideals are now also read as evidence of the manner in which such ideals have served in the historical process of colonization." A major function of post-colonial studies is the reinterpretation of historical events before only presented through the viewing lens of Western culture. If, as Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot suggests, history is written by those who are privileged with access to the modes of such production, then the events described are naturally told with a distinct bias by these authors. The imperial rhetoric employed--consciously or not--in the interpretation and transcription of historical events then reinforces the legitimacy of the colonizing power. This standard process of writing and formulating history discounts the experience of the others who are involved in the same events. Post-colonial theorists are looking in part at literature that proposes to tell the other side of the story, the side that was until recently, virtually silenced. What such a study often finds is that historical events have a much broader range of interpretations than the West presents.

The standard histories about the Haitian Revolution of 1791 are prime examples of the power of colonial discourse to interpret and portray an event through a monologic viewpoint. The event itself was a thirteen-year war fought over the right for people of color to be recognized as full human beings. What initially began as a conflict between plantation owning, ruling-class whites and land-owning mulattoes over political rights became a full-blown insurrection carried out by the majority of the population, the African and Creole plantation slaves, who demanded to be involved in the debate over the rights of man. The event, as it is related through historical presentations, was colored by widespread skepticism on the part of the whites over the capabilities of the black race to wage and maintain an effective front against European warring and political maneuvers. Despite the fact that the revolution ended with the declaration of the first black republic, little recognition has been given to the slave forces that made this possible. The paradigm of colonial discourse does not allow for this recognition or affirmation of the capabilities of the Other.

Two United States male writers have paid particular attention to the colonial discourse regarding the Haitian Revolution in their works: Herman Melville, writing the novella *Benito Cereno* in 1854-55, and Madison Smartt Bell, with the historical fiction *All Souls' Rising*, published in 1995. Though their texts come from two very different eras in United States history, and therefore employ different strategies, their literary aims are quite similar. They attempt to foreground and delineate the cultural mechanisms of repression that enable the colonizer to view and interpret the Haitian Revolution solely through a domineering and monologic perspective.

In *Benito Cereno*, Melville attempts to foreground the mind set through which the colonizer perceives the colonized. Melville demonstrates that these limiting perceptions often prohibit the colonizer from recognizing not only the capabilities of the Other but also the subversive and revolutionary activity often being carried out *by* them. Because of a blindness produced by Captain Amasa Delano's ideology on race, he was literally *unable* to recognize the slave revolt going on under his nose on the decks of the *San Dominick*. Through his narrative, Melville warns the slave owners and politicians of the United States just prior to the Civil War that they should recognize the potential and capabilities of the slaves, considered as Other, because they were likely soon to begin demanding their human rights. Melville demonstrates that imperial rhetoric was so ingrained in the culture of the United States it served to blind people like Delano from recognizing this potential. Melville subtly likens this to the perceptions of the ruling class when failing to realize what was transpiring in the Haitian Revolution. The conservative political and social climate of Melville's reading public necessitated that his criticism of colonialism be well disguised. His narrative is so subversively critical that its commentary on the opacity of imperial ideology has been disregarded by many critics since its publication.

Almost a century and a half later, Madison Smartt Bell presents a dialogic reading of the Haitian Revolution. In contrast to Melville's era, the focus on multi-cultural experiences and perspectives in literature of the post-colonial twentieth century opens the doors for Bell to be not only overtly critical of the colonial system in his text, but to do so in part by writing sections of his narrative *through* the voice of a slave. By privileging the voice of the colonizer as well as that of the colonized, Bell attempts to broaden the range

of perspectives on the event. The only first-person narrative in the novel appears in the sections where an eighteenth-century slave, Riau, tells of his own experiences in the revolution. Bell privileges Riau's voice in these sections while the rest of the text is written through a third-person, omniscient narrator. His attempt to speak through the perspective of Riau is an effort to understand the experience of a slave in Saint Domingue-and to give voice to the Other. With this strategy, Bell emphasizes the need for this hitherto unheard voice to be privileged and heard in accounts of its own history.

Like Melville, Bell highlights the limiting perceptions the colonizer maintains of mulattoes and blacks which blind him to recognizing the potential of this population majority. Bell's narrative strategies contest the colonial insistence that these perceptions are natural, based on facts of reality. His white characters demonstrate that the colonizer's perceptions of the Other and the subsequent mechanisms of repression are not natural but produced and systematized by the colonizer in the pursuit of his own power and wealth. Many of Bell's colonial characters undergo a change through the course of the text in their attitudes towards and faith in the marginalized. His main colonial character, Doctor Antoine Hébert, is wary from the start of colonial prejudices against the slaves and mulattoes and eventually takes a stand, by virtue of his own actions, against these seemingly immutable facts of reality. He manages to see through the limiting versions of the Other imposed by imperial rhetoric. The philosophy of the Enlightenment was founded on the concept of a hierarchy of man within which all races descended in line from white Western Europeans. Hébert's character performs a critique of the Enlightenment as he breaks away from this established way of thinking.

In their narratives, Melville and Bell deconstruct the discursive system of colonial repression and its ability to dismiss the power and potential of entire races of people. By exploring the cultural mechanics of repression, they effectively illustrate how the monologic colonial perspective on events is created and preserved. They meticulously demonstrate how systematized imperial rhetoric enables a powerful and unprecedented historical event such as the Haitian Revolution to be misinterpreted, discounted, and silenced for centuries in the interests of colonial progress. Through the subtle or overt heteroglossia in their novels, Melville and Bell, respectively, begin to dismantle the monologic perspective of Empire in an effort to offer Other interpretations of this event to critically engaged and perceptive readers.

Colonial Blindness

When American ship captain Amasa Delano climbs aboard the Spanish ship *San Dominick* in Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno*, he is unable to assess the situation at hand, despite the many clues before him. The ship has an air of the unreal as "a clamorous throng" of black slaves and white sailors are together inhabiting the deck. It is 1799, and on a ship transporting slaves to Peru, all blacks should be fettered below.

The black slaves, unbeknownst to Delano, have taken control of the ship, having killed more than half of the white seamen in their efforts to attain dominance over those remaining whites who can still guide the *San Dominick* to their new destination: the African country of Senegal. Both Delano and the reader are left to assess the clues in the day's scene on the ship in order to make sense of the evident breaches of normalcy. A

third person narration details Delano's perceptions and interpretations as he tries to put his finger on the awkward behavior of the Spanish captain, Benito Cereno, and the seemingly insubordinate behavior of the slaves, particularly Cereno's attendant, Babo. Melville positions his readers as witnesses to Delano's alternating pity for and distrust of the ineffectual captain, Don Benito. He requires the reader to perceive events through Delano's eyes. Amidst the slovenly disrepair of the ship, Delano observes a "noisy indocility" in the black slaves accompanied by "what seemed the sullen inefficiency of the whites" (Melville 62). Delano, though highly suspicious of these clues, consistently dismisses them as the result of "long-continued suffering [which] seems to have brought out the less good-natured qualities of the Negroes, at the same time, impairing the Spaniard's authority over them" (Melville 61). He repeatedly concludes that all the ship needs is the presence of "stern superior officers," that is, European hierarchy, to put the Africans back in their place and to regain the appropriate status quo on board (Melville 65). Delano reads this situation according to the ideology of the Enlightenment which insists that, as less than human, blacks were thought to achieve their highest potential when controlled by Europeans through brute force. Through Delano's reasoning, Melville offers a look at one of the many contradictions found in the colonialist's position toward slaves. If a slave was considered to be subservient, submissive and ignorant enough to be incapable of acting out against a white person, then why was there a need to fetter them and keep them out of sight? As Trouillot suggests:

On the one hand, resistance and defiance did not exist, since to acknowledge them was to acknowledge the humanity of the enslaved. . . .

Thus, next to a discourse that claimed the contentment of slaves, a plethora of laws, advice, and measures, both legal and illegal, were set up to curb the very resistance denied in theory. (Trouillot 83)

Melville employs a third person omniscient narrator to ironize Delano's perspectives so that the reader may see them critically. The technique is subversive in that it engages the reader, who in Melville's time may have been steeped in colonial thinking, to do the critical work of detecting the faults in Delano's perspective. The narrator introduces Delano in such a way that the reader may initially admire him. When he first arrives at the stranded *San Dominick*, he appears as a kind-hearted, generous and capable captain. He organizes supplies to be brought on deck to relieve the hunger of the surviving crew, and he courageously remains on the ship alone while his sailors ferry the supplies. He expresses sincere satisfaction at the prospect of cheering up Benito and saving him from this disaster. Like the most competent Enlightenment man, he proceeds to analyze with meticulous reason the various peculiarities he discovers between Benito's negligent and ungrateful attitude and the general state of chaos among the slaves. The reader may take comfort in Delano's apparent competency while they both try simultaneously to read the situation at hand.

The reader questions Delano's ability to accurately assess the situation on the *San Dominick* when the captain's rationalizations cannot account for particular events. Delano finds it strange that the white sailors and black slaves are mixed together on the deck and witnesses various "instances of insubordination" on the part of the slaves in this context (Melville 70). In one case, a slave boy stabs a Spanish sailor and receives no reprimand

from any superior. On another level, Babo often displays impropriety by talking freely in the presence of the two white captains. With the help of narrative diction that suggests a mysterious air to the day's events, the reader may begin to suspect that Delano's interpretation of these events is stunted by some kind of limitation. The stereotypes he imposes on the black slaves prohibit him from understanding their involvement in the events transpiring on the ship. Instead of suspecting that Babo may have a hand over Benito and may be forcing words into his mouth, Delano rationalizes that Benito is too ill to speak for himself and too tired from the affair to properly condition and restrain Babo.

In "Benito Cereno," Melville does not privilege his readers with the perspectives of the African slaves. We are not privy to information about how they were taken from their homes and families, how they endured the bleak conditions, cramped and fettered under the deck, or how they may feel about their retaliation against people who have treated them as less than human. Instead, the reader is privy only to the colonial interpretation, as signified through Delano. Even in the reference to the court hearing at the end of the text, Babo's silence reinforces the systematic privileging of the white perspective. In "Whose Foot on Whose Throat? A Re-examination of Melville's *Benito Cereno*," Glenn Altschuler suggests that Melville "presented blacks in the only way in which they could be seen in his society--through the eyes of whites" (Altschuler 388). Melville calls into question the colonizer's perspective of the colonized and uses various literary techniques to cause the reader to doubt Delano's way of seeing. In doing so, Melville inevitably emphasizes the blindness of the colonizer. Despite the many clues which would suggest it, Delano never considers the possibility that this ship, stranded with little provisions and much disorder off

the coast of Chile, may be experiencing a rebellion where the slaves have taken control.

Delano fails to consider the scenario of a slave revolt because it is out of the realm of possibility for him as defined by his ideology. In the late eighteenth century, the classification of man that grew out of the Enlightenment regarded blacks as having progressed little more than apes. They were certainly, in Delano's eyes, "too stupid" to be involved in any organized conspiracy, even one conceivably planned in conjunction with a white like Don Benito (Melville 90). According to Delano's ideology, "whites . . . by nature, were the shrewder race" (Melville 90). In examining colonial discourse, we see this Othering as the most fundamental form of imperial rhetoric because the stereotypes it perpetuates become the basis for all perceptions about and uses of colonized people, their labor, and their natural resources. The black slaves are characterized by Delano's world view as possessing a charming "docility arising from the unaspiring contentment of a limited mind" (Melville 100). At the same time, the narrative fact that the slaves are maintaining a sly and effective mutiny, subtle and controlled enough to be misperceived by Delano, suggests to the reader that the slaves are more capable than this stereotyping allows for them to be.

Melville makes subtle but direct reference to the Haitian Revolution in *Benito Cereno* by changing the name of Benito Cereno's ship--as it is recorded in the journals from which he adapted the story--from the *Tryal* to the *San Dominick*. In "Benito Cereno and New World Slavery," Eric J. Sundquist adds that by altering the date of the episode from 1805 to 1799, Melville "accentuated the fact that his tale belonged to the age of democratic revolution, in particular the period of violent struggle leading to Haitian

independence” (Sundquist 95). Melville’s tale, more generally speaking--and among other aims--deals with the fears of the times. Writing *Benito Cereno* in 1854-55, in the decade before the American Civil War, Melville looks back at the catalysts which eventually led to the abolition of slavery. In the late eighteenth century, slavery was a solidly established institution in the United States--one upon which much of the wealth of the country depended. At this time, news of the slave uprisings of the Haitian Revolution spread fear and anxiety among land and slave owners. They were afraid that if news of the revolution leaked to their own slaves, they would undoubtedly attempt similar rebellions. Thus “Haiti came to seem the fearful precursor of black rebellion throughout the New World” (Sundquist 95).

The idea that slaves could be capable of usurping positions of power previously established solely for whites was revolutionary. It was frightening and infuriating to colonial and slave-owning whites. It threatened not only their established way of life but also the ideology upon which it was based. It challenged the white Enlightenment belief that blacks were biologically inferior to whites and therefore threatened the self-positioning of whites as the dominant race. For many, like Delano, it was unbelievable even as it was actually happening. “[M]ight not the San Dominick, like a slumbering volcano, suddenly let loose energies now hid?” (Melville 82). Melville’s narrator here suggests that the revolution in Saint Domingue may unleash a struggle for liberation and human rights on the part of the black slaves that had so far been successfully repressed in the United States. Melville’s story concludes with a reference to the hearing following the suppression of the revolt during which the main instigator, Babo, is tried. Like Delano,

the tribunal is highly suspicious of the events which occurred on the *San Dominick*. Had it not been for the depositions of surviving sailors, Melville reports, the tribunal would have concluded that Benito Cereno only “raved of some things which could never have happened” for what they heard seemed entirely inconceivable (Melville 123). Melville demonstrates, by positioning the reader as witness to Delano’s experience, that this colonial Enlightenment ideology effectively prohibits the colonizer from recognizing the true character and potential of the Other.

French ruling class aristocrats and plantation owners had a similar reaction to the slave uprisings that occurred in the French colony Saint Domingue, now known as Haiti, starting in 1791. When news spread that, in response to word of the French Revolution, slaves outside of the city of Cap Français had begun to burn plantations and murder plantation owners, the reaction of the aristocrats was one of disbelief. The reaction of plantation owners was outrage at such insubordination. No one thought that the slaves were capable of maintaining an organized or effective position against France--or any European power. Certainly, no one thought that the Haitian Revolution would last for thirteen years or that it would end with the establishment of the first black republic in modern history.

History of the Haitian Revolution

Under the leadership of Columbus, the Spanish were the first to colonize the island of Hispaniola, in 1494. Trinidadian-born, African-American historian C.L.R. James estimates that over the course of the next fifteen years of forced labor in gold mines, the

indigenous population of the island was reduced from an estimated half-a-million to 60,000 (James 4). In 1517, Charles V of Spain authorized the first importation of slaves from Africa, believing that they would be more resilient in the heat and humidity of the region than the Caribs, Arawaks, and Tainos native to the island. In effect, the Africans would not necessarily be more resilient to the climate than people native to it, but the African slave trade would certainly be a more inexhaustible source of labor than the dwindling number of indigenous people. This new world slave trade would export an estimated fifteen million slaves from the shores of Africa by 1865 (Sundquist 99). In 1695, the Treaty of Ryswick between France and Spain granted the intruding French the western portion of the island which they proceeded to call Saint Domingue.

By 1791, Saint Domingue was France's richest colony, known as the Jewel of the Antilles. Plantations run with the forced labor of African and Creole slaves produced sugar, cotton, and indigo to support the politics and lifestyle of those in the mother country across the sea as well as the landlords both absent and living on the plantations. Though numbers may vary slightly according to sources, there were an estimated 450,000 slaves producing the wealth of 39,000 whites. 20,000 new slaves were imported annually to make up for those who died of disease, malnourishment and overwork, as well as the maroons, slaves who fled to the mountains to escape the brutality of their slave owners. Another 27,000 people of mixed race inhabited the 10,000-square-mile island (Bell xii). Many of these mulattoes were free, wealthy and land-owning, but none were granted any political rights by the ruling class known as the *grand blancs*. Political instability began in Saint Domingue when the whites and mulattoes started to speak freely about the debate

arising in France over equal rights between the two groups. Much like Captain Delano, the whites and mulattoes had no faith that the slaves around them were intelligent and perceptive enough to understand the issues being discussed. While the two groups prepared to struggle over the issue of equal rights, however, the slaves were planning to enter the debate as a faction worthy of recognition and rights.

Silenced History

Madison Smartt Bell was inspired to write about the Haitian Revolution in part because there is so little written in English about the event. For an event of such magnitude--unprecedented in its time--and with such potential to affect politics around the world, the Haitian Revolution has been kept, as Trouillot would insist, effectively silenced. Upon learning about this history, Bell asks, "Why does no one know about this?"

In *Silencing the Past. Power and the Production of History*, Trouillot proposes that because the Haitian Revolution posed a threat to Western ideology, historians of the West "found explanations [for the event] that forced the rebellion back within their worldview" (Trouillot 91). The explanations of the politicians in Paris or the landowners in Saint Domingue ignored the Enlightenment-based revolutionary aims of the insurgents and placed the events instigated by them into a trivializing context, one that reeked of chaos and rationalizing excuses. For example, "[s]ince blacks could not have generated such a massive endeavor, the insurrection became an unfortunate repercussion of planters' miscalculations" (Trouillot 91). The approach taken by textbook writers of history has been to silence the events by simply erasing them. Consequently, as Bell suggests, we

don't even learn about the Haitian Revolution throughout the course of our standard Western education.

Trouillot, like many scholars in the area of post-colonial studies, strongly believes that a reinterpretation of the past events of colonial history is necessary--one that would do justice to the varying perceptions of the multiple participants involved. The experiences and interpretations of the colonized must be told alongside those of the colonizer. Trouillot asserts: "The silencing of the Haitian Revolution is only a chapter within a narrative of global domination. It is part of the history of the West and it is likely to persist . . . as long as [this] history . . . is not retold in ways that bring forward the perspective of the world" (Trouillot 107). Bell offers reflections on non-western experiences of the revolution in his narrative by having the young slave Riau tell his version of the story through his own voice. Riau is thus empowered to relate his own experiences in the revolution, effectively symbolizing the many experiences which have been repressed for so long.

Riau's first person point of view, in *All Souls' Rising*, engages the reader to better understand the experience of an eighteenth-century slave in Saint Domingue. With a distinct poetic rhythm and diction, Riau's voice informs the reader of the history of slave resistance in the region. He tells, for instance, the story of the old slave Macandal from the time his arm was severed in the cane mill to the point when he organized an attempted large-scale revolt by poison. This perspective reveals the opposition being staged, or attempted, by the slaves throughout the colonization of Saint Domingue.

Riau's voice also provides an openly critical look at the colonists and their

treatment of the slaves. In his narrative, he is consistently distrustful of whites, their motives and their belief systems. As Riau observes the mulatto Choufleur at the slave meeting in Bois Cayman, he observes, “he had the face of a man of Guinée, but the expression of a whiteman--cruelty, and the habit of power his whole life” (Bell 114). The distinct split between the two cultures is dramatized when Jean-Pic (when possessed by the spirit Ghede) asks the uniformed Riau for bread and all Riau has are useless coins. Jean-Pic responds, “I cannot eat these metal pieces. . . . I ask you *bread*” (Bell 471-2). Riau consistently critiques the white political and economic system as full of empty ritual and signification: money, uniforms, titles and detached military tactics used, not in the service of any spiritual enrichment, but only for the gain of power and wealth by French colonials.

Riau’s perspective stresses that the slaves’ identities are negated in the context of slavery. He conveys a strong attachment to Guinée and the power or “secrets” that the slaves have always drawn from this homeland. Riau becomes distressed because he has forgotten the language of Guinée and is afraid of not being understood if he ever does make it back there. Being taken from this homeland, Riau insists, “was the same as death” (Bell 469). This narrative commentary suggests that as slaves, people lost their spirit, their identity, and became like zombies: “No one is there in the head of a slave, only *cadavre*” (Bell 470). Riau’s own story ends when he runs away from his military position in Toussaint’s army to be alive again, hiding in the mountains as many of the indigenous people did for years. Although he does carry remnants of “civilization”: a pistol and watch, Riau has discarded his uniform, his military rank and title, his money, and has

escaped in the effort to find his own identity again, to regain the subjectivity which had been negated in his involvement with white culture. Riau's perspective in the text presents readers with a dialogic interpretation of the Haitian Revolution. This story of resistance and its critique of colonial powers is absent in the colonist's monologic reading of the event and can be adequately represented only through a representative voice of a slave.

Vèvè Clark suggests, in "Haiti's Tragic Overture," when the perspectives of the silenced emerge as a countercontext to the colonial history written from the perspective of the ruling-class, we have a chance at an expanded, more complete and accurate, shared cultural memory (Clark 239). This process forces an encounter on the part of Westerners with the histories of oppression experienced by millions of people. When we acknowledge the voice of the Other, we must listen to the experiences of suffering told through it. We then acknowledge our complicity in this suffering. In Bell's ambitious undertaking to tell the story of the Haitian Revolution, he represents the atrocities committed by the colonizer against the Other as a result of deeply-set ideological beliefs and the repression necessary to preserve them and the boundaries they produce. He likewise dramatizes the reciprocal atrocities committed by the colonized in efforts to retaliate against the oppressor and prove themselves as autonomous humans. A graphically violent narrative like Bell's invites its white Western readers to bear witness to colonial repression and its bloody repercussions and to accept a degree of responsibility for the residual effects of this oppression.

In "Discourse in the Novel," Mikhail Bakhtin suggests that different voices in literature serve to represent the varying social backgrounds and ideologies which

inevitably come together in a given context. The speech of characters introduces heteroglossia to the novel by dramatizing a multiplicity of social voices and their “links and interrelationships” (Bakhtin 263). In Bell’s text, we are exposed to the language and actions of characters that run the gamut from peasant slaves to land-owning whites. The socio-ideological positionings revealed through these voices also range from identity and sympathy with the struggle of the slaves to adamant resistance against it. With these character zones, Bell attempts to delineate the social and political situation of the Haitian Revolution.

Doctor Antoine Hébert is the main colonial protagonist, one with whom the reader establishes a relationship of trust. The text begins and ends with the story of Hébert’s dedicated quest in Saint Domingue for his sister, during which he comes into contact with the other characters. The reader immediately identifies with his humanity when, in the first chapter, Hébert displays courage in talking politics with plantation owner Michel Arnaud and sensitivity in reacting to Arnaud’s torturing of one of his slaves. In contrast with Arnaud, Hébert regards slaves as human. While Arnaud complains that his slaves are animals, Hébert responds, courageously in this political climate, “I believe they are like men and women” (Bell 20). The narrator positions Hébert from the start as a character who will represent a perspective dialogically in critical contrast to that of the eighteenth-century pro-slavery colonist.

Doctor Hébert’s character dramatizes the notion that colonial attitudes were learned rather than simply perceptions of natural phenomena. Hébert is shocked at the apparent antiquity of the *le cercle des Philadelphes* as the group placidly listens to

presentations on the evidence for scientific racism from all the legitimate doctors of Cap Français. Monsieur Panon heads the lecture with a piece entitled, “*Le Nègre et la Bienfaisance*”--bienfaisance being the “philosophical proposition that all things work together for good” (Bell 525). Hébert observes Panon speaking with two priests and imagines they could be ironically concurring that “blacks had been specially supplied by God’s Providence to serve as laborers in these colonies” (Bell 136). Indeed, the ideology of colonialism insisted on its god-given role to improve the moral condition of the colonized (Spurr 66). And, as we have seen in Delano, Enlightenment ideology allows for violence and forced labor to be used in the pursuit of this goal. Hébert appropriately paraphrases Panon’s speech and, in doing so, reveals the self-seeking and ironic benefits of this ideology:

The Negro was neither ape nor man, but Panon would classify him, according to the Linnaean system, somewhere between these two. Much the same as a mule, the Negro was providentially designed for the bearing of burdens. Within the best of all possible worlds, *la bienfaisance* had arranged the constitution of the Negro so that he (like the mule again) could best be retained in the path of virtue by beating and whipping (Bell 136).

The juxtaposition of characters with differing and evolving ideologies suggests that although the Enlightenment perception of the Other was common to its time, it was not as natural as the colonizer would insist. Plantation owners like Arnaud consistently beat and torture their slaves under the guise of helping them to improve their virtue and morality,

and yet their paranoid fear of losing superiority over the slaves suggests an alternative, unspoken motivation for this treatment. Riau insists that the white men, knowing the black slaves outnumber them ten to one, are afraid of being overpowered and that “this was the fear that drove the whip” (Bell 117). Hébert represents the notion that this attitude towards slaves is not a natural position. For he, in contrast to the *grand blancs* around him, demonstrates an increased sensibility toward the position of slaves in the ranking of humankind. He is shocked that the philosophy of human nature and rights in the colonies is lagging so far behind that of Europe, and he recognizes the level of unnecessary atrocities committed against the slaves beyond mere whipping. He also recognizes the audacity of the members of the Royal Society in attempting to classify people with dark skin along with the flora and fauna of the island in the hierarchy of being (Bell 135). Spurr labels this colonial practice as naturalization: “while it identifies a colonized or primitive people as part of the natural world, it also presents this identification as entirely ‘natural,’ as a simple state of what is, rather than as a theory based on interest” (Spurr 157).

In the scene following the lecture, Hébert gives a kind of empathetic toast to the mummified head of an Arawak enclosed in a glass case before him, recognizing on the face of the Indian--whose tribe had long been extinguished by the Spanish--“a strange knowing smile” (Bell 136). Implicit in this narrative is Hébert’s acknowledgment that the indigenous people may very well have been wiser than the colonists. Throughout the text, Hébert demonstrates an understanding of the limitations and costs of colonialism. He recognizes the short-comings of the whites in their refusal to grant humanity to the

mulattoes and blacks, and he recognizes the positive characteristics of these latter groups that defy colonizing classifications. Hébert's public union with the mulatress Nanon is a bold attestation to this. Hébert suggests that rather than being protected by the rationalization that difference is natural, the colonizer must recognize the political and economical aims which create these stereotypes.

Imperial rhetoric insists on the superiority of the colonizer by labeling the colonized with negative, inferior characteristics. These qualities essentially include everything that the Western European claims not to be. One of the most common stereotypes imposed on the colonized in this process of Othering is that of sexual impropriety. The Other is often characterized as being overly sensual and immorally sexual. Bell engages the reader in calling into question this trope of imperial rhetoric by dramatizing its dynamic in character dialogue. Captain Maillart casually suggests to Hébert that he engage a mulatress woman in Le Cap for the evening. Speaking of Nanon, Maillart comments, "She's made for love--and yours for the asking" (Bell 65). Hébert's shock at this commentary and his polite apology to Nanon set his ideology in direct contrast to Maillart's. The latter nevertheless insists, "It's what they're good for. After all, they're not white women" (Bell 66). What respectable role white women play in this text in contrast to the stereotype of sexually immoral mulattoes is deliberately ambiguous. For example, Madame Isabelle Cigny, in Le Cap, is also adulterous. She constantly entertains the company of two young men in her parlor who are eager to be her lovers. Furthermore, she seduces Maillart while placidly accepting the knowledge that her

husband is regularly cheating on her as well. In his implicit belief in the superiority of white women, Maillart is referring only to an exterior sense of decorum that is contradicted by actual behavior. According to the social norms of the time, this facade places them above colored women in the eyes of society despite their actions. These characters ironize the ruling class stereotyping of blacks, revealing it as a cover for contradiction and hypocrisy.

Although Haitian-American Joel Dreyfuss claims that Bell's representation of the mulatto character Choufleur depicts him as unfairly evil, I would argue that his character zone in the text exposes the positioning and stereotypes of eighteenth-century mulattoes in Saint Domingue. Choufleur's character is admittedly conniving though the political dialogue suggests his social position necessitates this to an extent. With factions constantly changing sides throughout the revolution, Choufleur often did not know whom to trust and so uses his alliance with one faction to manipulate another. This manipulation is justified in the sense that Choufleur, on the basis of his skin color, is treated as though he exists in some limbo between social groupings. His actions are manipulative because this is the only way he can gain any political or social power and subjectivity.

Choufleur is portrayed as unspeakably cruel to his white father, skinning him alive for failing to acknowledge him as a son. Choufleur's behavior dramatizes his rage at being outcast from the human race on the basis of the racial mixture of his blood. The action is of course inexcusable, but the scene demonstrates--in an extreme way--the frustration Choufleur experiences at being caught between the races, having little rights because of his color. We can at least see the injustice Choufleur is trying to avenge through his actions

are extreme.

The juxtaposition of character actions in the text forces the reader to recognize contradictions found in the colonizer's moralistic judgement of the violent actions of the Other. In contrast to Choufleur's revengeful actions, many of the *grand blancs* (Arnaud for example) are unspeakably cruel in torturing their slaves even when they are guilty of no wrongdoing and certainly no act of injustice. Claudine Arnaud tortures the innocent and victimized slave Mouche, in a slow and grotesque way, and her self-mutilation throughout the rest of the text does little to absolve her from guilt for this. Claudine subsequently isolates herself in the convent and sets herself afire because she is haunted by her torture of Mouche. These acts of attrition are nonetheless self-centered. Her failure to make amends with any of the slaves through direct communication demonstrates that she still does not see the slaves as worthy of this retribution. In "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," Paulo Freire suggests that entering into solidarity with the oppressed is a radical posture: "The oppressor is solidary with the oppressed only when he stops regarding the oppressed as an abstract category and sees them as persons who have been unjustly dealt with, deprived of their voice, cheated in the sale of their labor--when he stops making pious, sentimental, and individualistic gestures and risks an act of love" (Freire 34-35). Claudine's ideological positioning as the wife of a slave-owning and abusing colonial prohibits her from taking this radical step. These dramatizations of violence demonstrate that, according to the colonizer's assumed position of authority, he feels his actions need no justification. Claudine here is held accountable to no one but herself. On the other hand, insubordinate action carried out by the colonized, particularly

violence like Choufleur's, is judged by the colonizer as unacceptable. By juxtaposing these character zones, Bell effectively exposes the contradictions inherent in imperial rhetoric.

An initial outbreak of violence in *All Souls' Rising* enables the slaves to take over the plantations of Lambert, Noé, and Gallifet. Beyond killing the plantation owners and overseers, the slaves rape white women, loot the estates, and burn the fields of cane. Bell's graphic dramatization of every aspect of this violence suggests that the untold suffering they had experienced as slaves and their frustrated attempts at previous uprisings combined to create an anger deep enough in the slaves to lead them to treat the whites as they had been treated--with grotesque violence. In the morning after the start of the insurrection, Riaux, though shocked by his own actions, conveys a satisfaction at this revenge: "It was pleasant to see them like they were, all stunned and blind with misery, the same expressions as our people wore when they were carted from the barracoons to the slave market at Le Cap" (Bell 175). Nevertheless, Riaux insists that the slaves recognized that by their actions, they were on some level complicit with the similar actions of the whites. Riaux looks at the destruction on the morning after the insurrection and sees only smoke everywhere, with a red blaze where the sun should be: "This was the hell where Jesus sends people who serve him poorly, and I saw that he had made it here for the whites as they deserved but that somehow we must be in it with them too" (Bell 175). The binary of Empire is deconstructed here as the slaves are shown to be capable of extreme violence. And yet Riaux's recognition of this capability in himself is a more ethical and self-critical stance than that of the colonizer.

The scenes leading up to and including the revolt suggest the slaves would not have been heard through their voices alone, as can be deduced from the failed politicking by the mulattoes and by the slave leader Toussaint: the whites would not listen to verbalized or written pleas for equality. The slaves were left with little choice but to retaliate against the whites with violence equal to that with which they had always been treated. In some way then, Ríau's dialogue brings readers to consider the slaves as being forced to act as the whites did in order to be taken seriously by them. The ruling-class listens to nothing short of large-scale violence. It takes this much for them to only begin to realize that the slaves were capable human beings.

The white response to the violence of the insurrection is, ironically, horror and outrage. The extreme action taken by the slaves is out of keeping with their roles as they are prescribed by the colonizer. When Arnaud returns to town from buying guns from Tocquet, he witnesses the mulattoes wreaking havoc in the city. Arnaud asks Père Bonnechance, "Did you not see what inhumane monsters they are?" (Bell 200). This is, of course, the same man who tortured by hanging the slave who killed her newborn child (to save it from slavery) and who is infamous for his horrible treatment of slaves. The irony here cannot escape the reader. The priest's answer is incomprehensible to Arnaud: "It may be that they follow the old dispensation. . . . An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Bell 200). Arnaud dismisses this conjecture as though he cannot hear it. Indeed, Arnaud is shown as incapable of seeing his own actions objectively in relation to those whose actions seem insubordinate to him. The arrogant self-positioning of the Enlightenment imperialist lacks critical or moral self-awareness. The posture of the

colonist is to view actions in the Other as more reprehensible than those same actions carried out by oneself. Freire suggests that the radical nature of this hypocrisy lies in the fact that “[w]ith the establishment of a relationship of oppression, violence has *already* begun. Never in history has violence been initiated by the oppressed” (Freire 41). And yet the colonizer’s monologic perspective depends on projecting the source of violence away from himself.

Bell’s portrayal of Toussaint Louverture (still known as Toussaint Bréda during the time span of this narrative) and his political career dramatizes the repressive dynamic between the colonizer and the colonized. The colonizer’s Enlightenment ideology of the chain of humanity, combined with a fearful desire to protect his dominant positioning, causes the colonizer to underestimate the potential of slave leaders like Toussaint and to deal with them in terms colored with deceit and trickery.

Toussaint’s character zone is set in contrast to that of the colonial characters. He is portrayed as humble, reserved, and honest. Dedicated to bettering the condition of the slave class, Toussaint acts as a wise mentor and disciplinarian to his sons and other slaves like Riau. Beyond his role as a servant, his political tactics as a slave leader are determined and intelligent. Toussaint approaches his leadership more conservatively and ethically than did most of his counterparts. While many of the other slave leaders appear intent on achieving only blood-thirsty revenge, Toussaint is dedicated to carrying out the insurrection in a tactful and non-violent manner, attempting to gain the respect of the *grand blancs* and eventually to establish Saint Domingue as an independent protectorate

of France.

In contrast to Toussaint, the *grand blancs* operate with deceit in order to protect their positioning. Among their manipulations, they fail to honor agreements made on the basis of trust. Saint-Léger, a commissioner sent from France to make peace, promises Toussaint that if the white prisoners taken during the insurrection are delivered safely to them, four hundred slaves will receive their freedom and attempts at peace will commence. When Toussaint arrives in Le Cap to make peace with the *colonists*, “the *colons* of the Assembly would not keep the promises that Saint-Léger had made,” and no freedoms were granted (Bell 320). Toussaint, as a man of his word and honor, is sick at this blatant display of deceit and trickery. Through such scenes, the reader of Bell’s text undoubtedly admires Toussaint’s perseverance and honesty in the face of such adversity and injustice.

The colonizer’s underestimation of the capabilities of the Other is represented in the narrative of the insurrection as well as through the *grand blancs*’ treatment of Toussaint. Doctor Hébert is the first to realize that the ruling-class whites consistently speak about political issues in the presence of their slaves as though they are completely ignorant, for “the Creole sense of discretion did not extend to blacks” (Bell 98). In the presence of their servants, the *grand blancs* develop a scheme to overcome all opposition to slavery. Plantation owners Maltrot, Arnaud, and Bayon de Libertat devise a plan to defeat the revolutionary *petit blancs* by staging an insurrection by slaves on the northern plain. They believe that if the *petit blancs* see a glimpse of the chaos of black rule, they will want to revert their thinking in favor of white supremacy. At this point, the *grand blancs* not only talk about politics freely in front of the slaves, but also incorporate various

slaves into their scheme to make it appear realistic. They are effectively enlisting the slaves to work against their own best interests and chances for freedom while assuming that the slaves are too ignorant to realize this. Quite like Captain Delano, these *grand blancs* consider the slaves incapable of plotting a revolt of their own, particularly one that uses the scheme of the whites to their advantage. Furthermore, the *grand blancs* take it for granted that the order of black rule would be nothing other than complete chaos.

The colonizer's faith in the intelligence of the slaves is so minimal that they expect the slaves to cooperate on the basis of empty promises. In this relationship of repression, the colonizer fails to see the Other as worthy of compensation for services given or agreements made. In payment for carrying out the insurrection in the northern plain, Toussaint requests three days *congé* (rest) each week for all slaves and freedom for slave leaders. In addition, the whipping of slaves would be prohibited. These are, of course, small privileges to ask in return for securing the white class's wealth and dominance. Through the perspective of Riaux, we come to understand that, like promises made and broken by whites before, these promises would most likely not be seen through to fruition: "The King in France had made laws for us before this time. There was the Code Noir, which said that our masters must feed us, and limited our work, and outlawed the worst punishments, but many of the colons did not obey this law" (Bell 115). The extent of Riaux's awareness of politics is apparent as the slave refers to the decree of May fifteenth: "Lately, there were new laws about the colored people, but the colons would not obey these either" (Bell 115). Riaux reveals that the slaves in the field knew much more about politics and breaches of trust than the whites would ever allow themselves to realize. As

with Captain Delano, imperial rhetoric blinds the colonist to the abilities of the colonized to understand such political motives and manipulations.

The colonizer's mechanisms of repression are so firmly established that colonized people working to achieve their independence are driven to do so by way of the system in power, by mimicking this system. Toussaint's strategy was to learn to battle the white forces with the same wit and tactics used by them. With the background of his own education and the assistance of white prisoners, Toussaint learns to dictate eloquent European rhetoric for political correspondence. His first letter to Governor Blanchelande reinforces his "Army"'s allegiance to France and their devotion to fighting for justice. The letter is written with a perceptive appeal to the emotions and sympathy of the governor and with a stern air of unfaltering dedication to this mission. Toussaint claims here that the motto of his Army is "Conquer or Die for Liberty" (Bell 283). The letter is impressive and yet the immediate response to it is disbelief: one assemblyman declares that "[n]o nigger could have written that" (Bell 282). The assemblymen concur that the white royalists must be working with, or through Toussaint and his leagues of slaves. They cannot believe that any black man would be able to create such an assertive letter to the Governor. The response of the assemblyman is simply to take the letter and crush it underfoot. The scenario recalls Delano's inability to imagine that the slaves on board the *San Dominick* could be capable of plotting and carrying out an organized and tactically sophisticated rebellion.

Toussaint characterization as a wise and savvy military leader contradicts the colonial Enlightenment insistence that blacks were inferior and incapable. Through Riau's

covert perspective, we are able to see the astonished reaction of Lieutenant-Colonel Etienne Laveaux to Toussaint's abandoned military camp. Laveaux has come from France to direct his six thousand soldiers against the black insurgents. After losing almost two hundred men to the first attack, Toussaint retreats with his troops and soon after, Laveaux comes upon his empty camp. Riau, hiding in a tree, hears his reaction. The evidence of the sight lead the men to conjecture that there had been thousands of sophisticated men there. Laveaux concludes, "[w]hatever they are, they are not savages" (Bell 384). In fact, there were only 700 men at the camp and had officers seen their skin color, they *would* undoubtedly have called them savages. This dialogue suggests that by the objective evidence of their military organization, one can see that Toussaint and the black slaves were resourceful, wise, and savvy, and yet the ideological positioning of the officers toward skin color prohibit them from seeing or admitting this. Again we hear echoes of Delano's colonial blindness.

Throughout the text, Toussaint continues writing his perceptive and eloquent letters. One sent shortly after the first demonstrates that he is aware of the ongoing changes in political policy and that he is willing to compromise with the ruling-class if they will consent to it. Toussaint's series of letters imply that had he been treated with respect by the *grand blancs*, things might have been settled with very small concessions on the part of the ruling-class whites. Their disregard for Toussaint and his forces and their rude dismissal of Toussaint's attempts to compromise only lead to escalating terms and continued violence. This scenario dramatizes the colonists as so determined to protect their monologic positioning that they lose any opportunity for a reasoned settlement with

the blacks or mulattoes.

The colonists cajole the slaves to work for the goals of the colony by sharing with them superficial symbols of colonial grandeur and social status. In Bell's text, the slaves often are granted these material symbols of progress in lieu of the true marks of progress they are working for. When Toussaint is offering to fight for either side that will grant his people freedom (French or Spanish), Marquis d'Hermona offers freedom only to the *soldiers* who will fight for the Spanish. This agreement will not include other men, women, and children, though in addition to this select freedom, the soldiers will be given ribbons, coins, new uniforms, and "bigger louder names for [their] officers to call themselves" (Bell 423). In "C.L.R. James and the Haitian Revolution," Reinhard W. Sander suggests that it became a common practice throughout colonialism to "placat[e] potentially troublesome colonials with high-sounding titles and honours bestowed by the imperial government" (Sander 289). Clark associates this with the phenomenon of the "theatre state." This situation, the roots of which we can see in the early stages of the revolution, involves an emulation of a colonial power simultaneous with a resistance to it. So while the insurgents are trying to conquer the system imposed by the colonists, they are also adopting many of the symbols of this system, including military and social rank as signified through titles, uniforms and monetary wealth (Clark 249). The colonists, subsequently, use the attraction of these status symbols as a way to buy off the allegiance of colonized people. Bell portrays this phenomenon with the tendency of slave leaders, including Toussaint, to don the costumes and uniforms of the whites during the insurrection. The situation becomes most extreme when the Spanish begin to negotiate

with these symbols, granting the slaves purely material--and useless--acquisitions instead of the freedom they are fighting for. The colonized then, continue to work for the good of the colonizer and are still given nothing in return.

Rather than acknowledge Toussaint as a wise and intelligent black man--an idea that would run contrary to all of white Enlightenment philosophy--the colonizer in this text rationalizes Toussaint's capabilities as coming from a source beyond his own being. A frame narrative for this text is the story of Toussaint being brought to Brest, France, under the arrest, or kidnaping, ordered by Napoleon Bonaparte. The third person narrator comments that on his transport to Brest, Napoleon's officers "would not let Toussaint come near a penknife, though it could not be that they feared his suicide, which would have gladdened them indeed, but that with so slight a weapon he might seize control of the ship" (Bell 124). Based on his achievements, the French officials recognized Toussaint's power but did not associate it with his own ability or intelligence. Instead, Leclerc and his men come to associate Toussaint's cunning with the mysterious powers of vodun. This is a clear negation of Toussaint's intellectual ability to compete with these white men. Rather than admit he was capable of this, they attribute his achievements to foreign, unknowable powers. Toussaint, in this analysis, fits conveniently into the whites' projective classification of the black race as entirely Other and parallels Delano's inability to regard Babo and the other slaves on board to *San Dominick* as intelligent people.

En route to Brest, Leclerc, requests additional forces from Napoleon to ensure Toussaint's continued imprisonment: "[Leclerc] was transfixed by his belief that if Toussaint were able to so much as wet his boot toe in the water of any French port, he

would be magically translated back to Saint Domingue to spread fire and ruin and destruction” (Bell 127). Here Leclerc associates Toussaint’s work not only with supernatural powers but with fruitless destruction, belittling his dedicated effort to prove to the white ruling-class, through whatever means necessary, that all privilege should not be held in the hands of few. The first priority then is to put Toussaint in a “strong place in the middle of France, so that he can never have any way to escape and come back to Saint Domingue, where he has all the influence of the chief of a sect.” The next step would be to remove the other black men infected with Toussaint’s ideas: “It’s not everything to have removed Toussaint; There are 2000 chiefs here to have taken away” (Bell 127). Here Leclerc acts out what Spurr labels as the trope of negation. Spurr proposes that “[n]egation acts as a kind of provisional erasure, clearing a space for the expansion of the colonial imagination and for the pursuit of desire” (Spurr 92-93). This insistence that the black population of Saint Domingue was a void and furthermore, that the insurgents were a problematic entity to be eradicated, negates the identity and struggle of hundreds of thousands of people and thus preserves the monologic. Bell invites the reader to deconstruct colonial perceptions of the Other through the characterization of Toussaint. Toussaint’s abilities, intelligence, and tact run contrary to all of the characterizations of blacks found in eighteenth-century Enlightenment thought. Thus, the monologic perspective on the colonized is effectively challenged. The reader is prompted to read this history and understand the colonized people involved in it differently from the way in which the colonizer positioned them to be read.

Imperial rhetoric inherently situates the experience of the colonizer in the center of its discourse as the perceiving consciousness. As a consequence, the experience of the colonized in their condition of oppression is pushed to the cultural margins and there remains virtually silenced. The Haitian Revolution stands as an example of a large-scale resistance to colonial oppression that has been rationalized, repressed, and forgotten by a discourse that denies the capabilities of the oppressed. Herman Melville and Madison Smartt Bell, both writing from within the center, employ two very different techniques to offer a more realistic understanding of the marginalized experience of the eighteenth-century Haitian revolutionaries. The difference in their literary techniques reflects the degrees of readiness on the part of the (primarily) United States' literary public to accept critiques on colonialism. Melville's reading public in 1855 was so directly linked to colonial culture, it would have been resistant, at best, to considering overt criticism of Enlightenment philosophies of Man. Melville subsequently employed only the perspective of the white colonist through which to present the black slaves and their mutiny. But he, through various literary strategies, critiques this perspective by ironizing it so subtly that the reader doubts Delano's reliability. At the same time, the black slaves remain deprived of a voice through which to tell their own story. Melville also leaves the reader without the illustration of an alternative to colonial rhetoric. There is no character voice in the text that stands in contrast to this monologic perspective and regards the black and white characters in a critical, dialogic manner.

At the close of the twentieth century, writers in the United States are no longer as prohibited by the ideology of Imperialism from critically examining its rhetoric and

practice. Bell is free not only to look back at colonialism and critically analyze its faults, but he is able to do so in part by attempting to represent the voice of a black slave who experienced it. The reading public of this century is more ready to accept the idea that a person of one culture, gender, or class can effectively understand and represent the experience of someone from another. If *Benito Cereno* were written in this century, perhaps Babo would have the narrative voice he is missing in Melville's nineteenth-century text. Where Melville has presented his critique on slavery through Delano's single perspective, Bell employs a range of different voices and points of view to examine the contradictions, duplications, and complex effects of colonial rhetoric on both the colonizer and the colonized. The heteroglossia Bell incorporates into his text through character action, dialogue, and narrative point of view enables the reader to experience emotionally the complexity of colonial repression, resistance, and revolution.

Given their differences, Melville and Bell achieve very similar literary and political goals. Using two different approaches, they both critique eighteenth-century Enlightenment attitudes on race as they are manifest in the colonizer. Each engages the reader to be critical of these attitudes by way of narrative structure or juxtaposition of character zones. Melville's text effectively foregrounds and Bell's deconstructs the mechanisms of colonial oppression. In doing so, the reader experiences the constructed, discursive nature of these mechanisms. Both writers present the monologic perspective of the colonizer and then unwork, or deconstruct, it by demonstrating the shortcomings--the hypocrisy, blindness, and extremely dehumanizing violence--that result from such narrow thinking. By way of a subtly ironizing narrative critique, in the case of Melville, or a

diversity of character zones, in Bell, these writers effectively give voice to the Other, the silenced. As these voices enter literary dialogue, the monologic perspective of imperial rhetoric is effectively broken open and significant historical events like the Haitian Revolution may be re-read, and re-understood, in a new light.

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